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The Pioneer Aristocracy *

By LOGAN ESAREY, Indiana University.

IN the last twenty years we have again taken up the question of universal education; we are just beginning again the agitation to nationalize our industries; we are as undecided now as we were in 1860 concerning government ownership of public utilities; we have made little real progress with the labor question; the tariff is off and on again like Finnigan's train; a State wide prohibition law was enacted in Indiana sixty years ago and we are now again painfully working up to that point; we are a little nearer universal suffrage than we were in 1860; the military system of the State is exactly where it was in 1860, that is, there is none; a general reform in agriculture is now getting under way, but one-half of the State is now farmed much as it was in 1860. In all the essentials of fundamental progress we are very near where we laid down our tools in 1860. There is far more wealth now but it is not so evenly distributed; the laboring classes are in no better political or economic situation than they were in 1860; the farmers are living faster than in 1860, but hardly better; while the increase of absentee landlordism raises a more serious agrarian problem than had arisen in 1860.

We are at the end of the Civil War Regime. The period has been noted for its great industrial development. Its characteristic men are the so-called captains of industry. In the game of commercial aggrandizement they have shown the greatest skill and have been rewarded with enormous fortunes. But now public opinion has passed upon and condemned them in the means they used. Rebates, watered stock, blue sky companies, legislative corruption, interlocking directorates have become immoral and unsocial. The captains have been caught in the toils of their own expertness and the whole system which they represent is tottering

*The word "aristocracy" is used in its proper sense, meaning the most skillful, the most capable, the most highly educated, the best.

to ruin, and the captains themselves have been sent to the rear in disgrace.

These are the industrial aristocrats. They superseded what for lack of a better name I have called The Pioneer Aristocrats. Every period in history has soon or late brought forth a group of leaders in its dominant activity, sometimes political, sometimes clerical, sometimes industrial, sometimes social and sometimes agricultural. They are the experts with the knowledge and tools of that period. The pioneer aristocrats were the experts in developing farms under the conditions then prevailing. They were just as truly in possession of a body of organized knowledge and expert skill as any other aristocracy of which we have a record. They were the leaders, and in a way represented the best in pioneer society. It seems inevitable that an aristocracy must lose sympathy for the masses.

There are distinct problems and conditions the meeting and solving of which constitute pioneering. The conditions are a new stock of people in a new country. Social distinction and organizations formed in older communities, social cleavage which gradually takes place in older societies, family kinship and other ties which come to separate people into clans or groups, all of these are lacking in any large degree in a pioneer state. There is a large predominance of the young aggressive, radical element. Such in general are the folks. The frontier, their home, is also a land of untried resources, of untried possibilities. New crops must be raised, new seed times and new harvests are found necessary. New diseases requiring new remedies are met. In the midst of these new conditions certain problems must be solved. Houses must be built out of whatever material is readiest at hand, logs, stone, sod or brick. Farms must be opened up in the forest, on the prairie or on the arid plain; or perhaps mines must be opened. Whatever the most available resource of the country is, it must be utilized. A special body of skill and knowledge must be developed. This may involve the handling of a new metal, the discovery of a new farm crop, or the modification of an old one. Finally the staple products of the new country must be introduced to

the world and means of transportation and communication established. Of course, while this work is going on social institutions will be organized. The church and state will partake of the pioneering spirit. These in the abstract are the pioneer problems. The men and women who tear themselves away from established society, confront these conditions and attack these problems are called pioneers. The word itself, referring back to "peons" who founded the early Spanish settlements in America, has no trace of its original signification.

The pioneers of the Ohio valley were Scotch, Irish, German, English and French in origin. They themselves, in 1850, were little conscious of these different origins. Henry Clay paid the following brief tribute to these immigrants in a speech in 1832:

The honest, patient, and industrious German readily unites with our people, establishes himself on some of our fat lands, fills a capacious barn, and enjoys in tranquillity the abundant fruits which his diligence has gathered around him, always ready to fly to the standard of his adopted country, or of its laws, when called by the duties of patriotism. The gay, the versatile, the philosophical Frenchman, accommodating himself cheerfully to all the vicissitudes of life, incorporates himself without difficulty in our society. But, of all foreigners, none amalgamate themselves so quickly with our people as the natives of the Emerald Isle. In some of the visions which have passed through my imagination, I have supposed that Ireland was originally part and parcel of this continent, and that by some extraordinary convulsion of nature it was torn from America, and, drifting across the ocean, it was placed in the vicinity of Great Britain. The same open-heartedness, the same careless and uncalculating indifference about human life, characterizes the inhabitants of both countries. Kentucky has been sometimes called the Ireland of America. And I have no doubt that, if the emigration were reversed, and set from America upon the shores of Europe, every American emigrant to Ireland would there find, as every Irish emigrant here finds, a hearty welcome and a happy home.

They had been pioneering during two or three generations before reaching the Ohio valley. Each and all were refugees and certainly no one of them harbored any love for his native country. Unjust laws, governmental restrictions and persecutions were the reason for their emigration. A natural result of this was that each bore little patriotic regard for any government. They thus easily accepted the Jeffersonian statement that government is a necessary evil.

They looked with suspicion on a power from which nothing good had in their estimation ever emanated. Not until they, themselves, had made their own state and local governments in the valley did they begin to show any affection for government.

Likewise in the church they were all dissenters, the French Huguenots, the German Moravians and Dunkards, the Irish Catholics, the Scotch Covenanters, the English Methodists and the German and English Quakers. In their first American homes in western Pennsylvania, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, in the uplands of Carolina and Georgia, they sustained only the loosest connection with the colonial churches and governments. When they crossed the mountains during and after the Revolution these feeble attachments were snapped asunder. It was not until they had reconstituted their church organizations in the Ohio valley that they developed any filial love for their churches. It is hardly necessary to observe that these new political and religious institutions were organized in harmony with pioneer life.

For a century classical systems of education struggled for a footing among the pioneers but without any noticeable result. Colleges, seminaries and academies sprang up here and there in early Indiana, but they were exotic. The spirit of pioneer life never lived within their classic atmosphere. There were expressions in plenty of the appreciation of education by the pioneers, but no system attracted their earnest support because none ever cherished their ideals or attempted to teach their science, philosophy or skill. There were schools among the pioneers but none of them in the sense in which the present industrial schools cater to our industrial civilization. For this reason the pioneer aristocracy never supported the schools as it supported its own religious and political institutions.

The central system around which the others were organized was the art of reducing the wilderness to homesteads. Their ideal was the manorial homestead of England and Germany about 1700, the time when their refugee ancestors began leaving those countries. This has been the most important occupation in America during the last three cen-

turies. The art became highly developed after about 1740, when the first real American pioneer settlements were formed in western Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah valley and the Carolina and Georgia uplands, and reached its culmination in the Ohio valley about 1860.

Two radically different types of men and women attacked the problem. In Pennsylvania and the northern part of the Shenandoah were the refugee Germans called, until recently, the Pennsylvania Dutch, from southern and western Germany. In their German homes they had been peasants. For centuries it had been necessary for them to cultivate their little fields with the greatest care and skill and practice the most rigid economy in order to make a living and pay the heavy demands of the German landlords. Every foot of land was made to yield its greatest return. They produced little for the market and every need of the household had to be anticipated during the year in the growing crop. They accordingly developed a nice balance in their crops. There were sheep for clothing; cows for milk, butter and cheese; horses only enough for the work, with a preference for oxen, on account of their value for beef and hides after they were too old for profitable work; hogs for meat; geese or ducks for feather beds; chickens for eggs and table use; garden vegetables for the table; cabbage for sauerkraut; potatoes for winter use; apples for cider, apple butter, eating and drying; corn for feeding and for making whiskey; wheat for bread. They took extreme care of their farming implements, cleaned their fields of rocks and stumps, and built capacious barns for housing their stock and crops. All this knowledge and skill they had brought with them from the Rhine hills. They stuck close to their work, plodding, prosaic, practical. Their old homesteads along the Susquehanna, with their red brick houses, hillside barns and productive fields, bear ample evidence of their skill as farmers.

The exact counterpart and supplement of these were the English, Irish and Scotch peasants who settled in the Carolina uplands and in the Shenandoah. A glance at the map will show the close geographical relation of all these settlements which by 1750 were merged together. The long She-

nandoah valley, the "Great Valley" of Virginia as it was called then, furnishes an easy and open connection between the other two. Just as the Wallachian, Moravian, Palatine and other German peasants had the same general characteristics and all passed as Pennsylvania Dutch, so the Virginia and Carolina backwoodsmen possessed common characteristics and became known as Scotch-Irish or the "poor whites" in contrast with the wealthier slave owners and the slaves. The common thing in farming in England, Ireland and Scotland, as these peasants had known them, was stockraising. Especially was this true in Scotland and England, where they pastured their herds on the moors, mountains, and fenslands. Nothing more natural than that when they saw the grassy glades of their new country they at once became stock raisers and cattlemen, marketing their beeves at Charleston and Philadelphia. They acquired large bodies of land, let their stock stand out during the winter, feeding on cane and tuft grass, built large wooden houses, met many household needs with money from sales of cattle, and spent their leisure time roaming the woods, hunting or arguing politics and religion at the taverns or cross roads. They developed an intense, robust, independent individualism, rough and boisterous, artistic and imaginative. As politicians and preachers they were a tremendous success, as farmers and business men they were failures. The tumble down buildings and worn out lands of Virginia, the Carolinas and Tennessee are witnesses to their unthrifty farming. The Pennsylvania Dutch were the reverse. They soon lost their peasant piety, took little interest in politics but their granaries were the storehouses of the Revolution.

A century intervened, a long, hard century, full of the struggle with the wilderness, bloody Indian wars and the harsh discipline of the frontier, their "sojourn in the wilderness." The best class of Hoosier farmers of southern Indiana were the highest types of pioneer character. They fulfilled the definition in politics, religion, language, education and skill in farming. In politics they were Jacksonian Democrats, loud and boastful; in religion they were old-fashioned Baptists and shouting Methodists with a fair sprinkle of Dunkards, Quakers and Presbyterians, all pa-

trons of the campmeeting, that most agonizing form of punishment for sinners ever known in the valley. In language they excelled in the picturesque lingua of the Ohio valley, which for that reason has become known as the Hoosier dialect. They were strong for education, a smattering of the three R's, provided it stopped safely short of "book larnin," for they had a growing suspicion that literary culture and craftiness went hand in hand and would usually be found in company with some more objectionable form of moral obliquity.

In clearing a farm and making it a place for decent, comfortable living, not primarily a money-making instrument as is now the idea, they beat the whole universal world, to use an anglicised form of their own idiom. Their Buckeye neighbors were better statesmen, more cunning at a bargain; the Bluegrass mansions were places of affluence and culture as compared to their double, hewed log, or red brick houses; while the big prairie farms of Illinois were rapidly outstripping theirs in the size of their crops; but for all these they were still unsurpassed in those qualities that constituted the typical pioneers of the Ohio valley. The army of 200,000 young men who marched off to the service of their country during the Civil War and the other army of 200,000 young women who took their places on the farm are strong argument for the validity of the home life and the institutions provided by the pioneer Hoosier farmers of 1850 and justify a closer study; for, as mentioned above, when the war broke out these men were just emerged from the pioneer stage and had undertaken the solution of many of the political problems now confronting us.

Our aristocrats have the reputation of having been men of great physical strength and activity. Their daily life was conducive to bodily vigor. No better physical training could be prescribed today than to swing the ax or maul in the forest ten hours a day for months at a time. In this respect southern Indiana was full of Lincolns before the Civil War. Such men could help at twenty logrollings on as many successive days and not require a vacation afterward. Most young men could leap an eight rail fence and at gatherings it was not extraordinary to find a half dozen men each of

whom could jump a bar held level with the top of his head. An ordinary deer hunt would in the course of the day take them on a thirty mile tramp through deep snow. Harvesters would swing the scythe or cradle "from sun to sun" with only brief rests for dinner and lunch. Yet between "busy seasons" there were considerable periods of leisure. From the middle of August to the middle of October little work was done and again from Christmas till April work was easy. Usually a man who weighed 160 in August would weigh 200 in March.

But there is another side to this picture. In almost every household there was some old "hippo," broken either in body or spirit or usually both. Ague perhaps had robbed him of the vitality necessary to compete in the hard struggle. He could name a dozen diseases working on him. From his ailments he had constructed a science. His corns and his rheumatism warned him of approaching changes in the weather. The pale red setting sun foretold a disastrous plague, most probably smallpox or "yaller" fever. The crackle of the burning backlog announced an approaching snowstorm. The thick corn shuck, the low-hung hornets' nest, the busy woodpeckers and squirrels were sure signs of a hard winter. In the art of forecasting he was the successor of the seers, soothsayers and astrologers, last and least harmful of all the parasitic train. Science has usurped his throne though traces of his reign still linger. By his shrewd observations, his persistent guessings and artful "I told you so's" he gained a vast influence over the unscientific community.

Hippo was also a medical man. His specialty was "bit-ters." On fine days he would potter around the premises gathering roots, leaves and bark and concocting his nostrums. At other times he ventured as far as the store or to some neighboring crone where he compared theories, observations and experiences in the interest of his compound science of prophecy and pharmacology. So complete was his sway in this field that few homes could be found without its jug of bit-ters and so persistent has been that influence that few of us today are able to defend ourselves against the patent medicine fakers who cater to our inherited weakness.

Our aristocrats also had traditions. One hundred years of struggle in the wilderness with nature and the Indians had furnished many dramatic scenes and incidents. Their fathers and grandfathers had fought with General Lewis at Point Pleasant, with George Rogers Clark at Vincennes, with Wayne at Fallen Timbers, and with Harrison at Tippecanoe, to say nothing of the countless Indian raids from the conquest of old Duquesne, to that of Blackhawk, Boone, Wetzell, Kenton, Poe, and the warriors of Clark and Harrison were their heroes. Some future Scott will find these traditions as fascinating as were those of the Scottish border. No finer things are in the memories of many Hoosiers than these old tales as told by some pioneer who lingered twenty years beyond his allotted time apparently with no other purpose than to communicate his story to the next generation.

The volume of technical knowledge and skill acquired by the pioneer farmer far exceeds what is ordinarily supposed. Where there was no extraordinary rush, land was not cleared immediately. The intended field was laid off and timber selected for fencing. The fence was a square rail worm, built usually nine rails high. Each rail was ten feet long and about four inches square. The fence would thus be eighty inches high; if a pasture fence, it was staked and ridged or simply locked. The first choice of timber for the rails was walnut and poplar, though oak would be used rather than haul the rails a great distance, say a quarter of a mile. Usually the rails could be made so near the line of the fence that hauling, with oxen and sled, was not necessary. The rails were usually made in the winter while the sap was down because the timber split better then and the rails lasted longer. In making the rails an ax, an iron wedge or two, a maul, and at least two gluts, or wooden wedges, were necessary. The maul was made of second growth hickory, if possible a hickory without any red. The sapling, five or six inches through, was cut below the first roots and a maul about one foot long left. The handle was then dressed down to the proper size, the maul rounded off and the finished article set in the chimney corner to season a half year or so. The gluts were made of dogwood saplings three inches through, each glut being from twelve to sixteen inches long, dressed

down very carefully to a point. If not properly tapered the glut would bounce, utterly ruining the rail splitter's temper. The iron wedge was made with the same proportions and precision by the blacksmith. Thus armed the pioneer rail-maker went forth, as much a skilled mechanic as any cabinet maker. After the rails were laid up there was always danger of some descendant of Rip Van Winkle firing the woods.

After the fence was completed the underbrush was cut and piled and the trees and saplings deadened. This latter process required both knowledge and skill again; for some trees, as the hickory and willow, needed only to be barked; the oak, poplar and beech needed only to be sapped; while such as the gum and sycamore had to be cut deep into the red. Most trees when girdled or deadened immediately died, but if a willow were peeled in the spring there were usually some thousands of volunteer willows in its neighborhood a year later, while a gum or sassafras deadened out of season was a calamity. Trees deadened when the sap was up became sap rotten in two years, at which time if the clearing were fired many of the trees would burn down and then burn up. The remaining trees could be cut, rolled and burned easily. Most of the small stumps were likewise rotten and if the flock of sheep had been busy nearly all the sprouts were dead.

The field was thus ready for the plow. The most approved way of the first breaking was with a stout jumping shovel and two yokes of heavy, steady oxen. There was a certain amount of pleasure in watching such a plow tear through the rotten roots, but the completest torture this side of eternity was plowing with a jumping shovel in a rooty new-ground with a team of spirited horses. The plow, excepting the iron shovel and the cutter, was produced on the farm, as were also the ox yokes, and the oxen.

The same expert knowledge coupled with the same practical skill was necessary in all the various lines of farming activity. There was no refrigerator, but a house was built over a spring and places prepared so that the milk crocks and the butter bowl could get the benefit of the cool water. There was no cold storage, but the potatoes, apples and cabbage were holed up in the ground beyond the reach of frost

and a cellar provided for other articles of constant use during the winter.

Our Hoosier aristocracy had long ago lost all distinctions between Dutch and Irish but they had retained the Dutch characteristic of all-round farming and had acquired some new tastes which required an even wider range of production. In the barnyard were horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, ducks, geese, and chickens. The heavy draft horses that formerly drew the old Conestoga gave way to a lighter, quicker breed from Virginia and Kentucky, while at least two yokes of heavy oxen were kept for the heavy hauling around the farm. There must be at least a half dozen milk cows, for country butter, and hot corn bread disappeared in enormous quantities at breakfast in the presence of eight or ten husky young Hoosiers and two or three hired hands. At dinner or supper a quart of sweet milk was a modest allowance for each person, with perhaps an extra pint for the six and eight year olds, while a jug of cold buttermilk, fresh from the springhouse, was an ever present comfort when the hot harvesters came up to the shade to blow after marching across a ten-acre field. There must be two or three fat, yearling steers to tide over the period from October to Christmas, when the pork season was closed. A considerable amount of beef must be on hands also at butchering time to mix with the pork to make the proper quality of sausage. Last, there must be enough milk to make a dozen or so cheeses the size of a half bushel, for there might be a scarcity of butter sometime during the winter.

Our farmer also kept a weather eye on his porkers. There must be at least fifteen good two-hundred pounders ready for the hog-killing, which happened along about Christmas. There was no special rush, for, in any emergency like quarterly meeting or a political rally, a couple of sheep or a shote or a yearling steer could be killed. But the porkers must bear the brunt of the burden. They were ready for fattening when two years old, until which time they followed the law of the range, root hog or die. Their master never failed, however, at weaning time to clip off the tip of an ear, cut a notch in it, bore a hole through it or make some other mark as an indication of his affection and ownership. After one month's feed-

ing on corn the fifteen or twenty chief porcine actors at the hog-killing festival, one of the big events in pioneer life, were ready for their debut. It would take a small volume to give all the details of the hog killing, pork-curing process—the killing, the sticking, the scalding, the hanging, rendering lard, making head cheese, sausage, salting the meat in tubs, smoking and finally preparing the hickory hams for the summer season. So skillful were they and so tasty was the finished product that even today some of the choicest products of modern packing houses are labeled country sausage or country-cured hams.

Space will not permit further descriptions of farm life activities, but we must take one hasty glance at the house work, that busiest and most characteristic part of the farm life. The woman's sphere in pioneer life was large and indispensable. Outside the house she, together with the children, looked after the sheep, caring for the lambs in the early spring, shearing the sheep, washing, picking, carding, spinning, reeling, winding, knitting, weaving and making the cloth into coverlets, blankets and clothing. In a large family, and all were large, this was an endless task, lasting from early morn till late bedtime every day in the year except Sundays. Very few persons now living have the knowledge and skill to do this routine work which every pioneer girl learned as a matter of course.

The geese, most perverse of animals, were under the complete jurisdiction of the women. It required a flock of two or three dozen to furnish the huge featherbeds and pillows that were such an attractive feature of the farm home. Besides this every child when married off was presented with a featherbed and four pillows. And many a baked goose found its way to the dinner table of our aristocrat. Enough chickens, say one hundred, had to be raised to furnish eggs for the cooking, and the women used eggs freely in making coffee, corn bread, cakes and especially for a breakfast fry in the early spring. It was the social law that chicken should form the *piece de resistance* at all church festivals and the preacher's predilection for fried chicken was known of all women.

While the men looked after the cattle in general, the milk cows came under the special charge of the women; milking,

straining, churning and dressing the butter was more than a mere pastime.

In the dining room and kitchen the wife was more than queen, she was sole monarch and together with her daughters was the whole working force. Providing for the table required a foresight beyond our conception at present. The grocery store was no assistance to her. She had to plan a year ahead. The men assisted with the work to a small degree, but the family mother furnished all information and gave the general directions. The father looked after the meat and bread, but beyond that his knowledge and skill were limited. Canning was not practiced but there was no end of preserves, apple, peach, quince, crab apple, water melon, and citron; jams, marmalade, jellies of all varieties, maple syrup and sorghum, dried fruits, green fruits stored in cellar, spice brush, sassafras, balsam, sage, alder blossoms, buckeyes, catnip, pennyroyal, ditna and scores of other things to be gathered, prepared and laid away, some to be used in cooking, others as medicines, others as charms, as flavors for soups, meats, or cake. It was a whole science in itself. The remembrance of such a home makes many of our old grandfathers, still lingering with us, long for the good old times in a way we cannot appreciate and which we therefore attribute to dotage.

The skill of the pioneers was not all expended on the endless routine of work. The social life was quite as distinctive as the farm work. Here again a valid distinction can be drawn between the Hoosier and his neighbor. Society in the upper circles of the Blue Grass aristocracy was not different from that among the southern planters. Ohio society was affected largely by the New England settlers. In Indiana before the war one found almost a perfect mixture of the pioneering races.

The farmers were essentially religious. Neither dancing, gambling, duelling, drunkenness, nor debauchery of any kind was countenanced by the best class, although of course all existed. The various church days such as Quarterly Meeting, Association, Yearly Meeting, Synod and above all the Camp Meeting were celebrated each in its way. The spelling match, literary, joint debate between preachers or politicians of op-

posite beliefs, the stump speaking, the barbecue, weddings, infares, charivaris, huskings, apple parings, shooting matches, horse races were the commoner forms of strictly social gatherings. Not one of the above has been outlawed or discountenanced in the half century since they were so largely in vogue.

Having pictured in a brief way the pioneer life let us analyze it. In the first place it was an open society to all who had the merit to belong. If the man and his wife had the ability to build up a home of this description they were by that token welcomed into the social neighborhood provided their morality was up to a tolerable standard. Democrats, Whigs, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists mingled in good fellowship. In fact, they admired the one who could lay on the cudgels with force in a political or sectarian controversy. Pedigree, politics, religion, or even wealth availed little without morality, open door hospitality and the means of good living. Education was not necessary, though a man was expected to be able to read his Bible, his county newspaper (usually borrowed) and understand preachers and stump speakers. This latter was not always a very severe test. In other words this aristocracy was very democratic.

Again, all this abundant activity was for the home. Could one of these old pioneers come back to us now we may imagine with what surprise he would ask us how we became bondsmen of this unsparing master we call the market. We raise our chickens for the market, our butter is prepared for the market, our corn, our cattle, our hogs, our apples, all, everything are prepared for this all-consuming monster. Even worse, our schools are preparing our children for the market and to the market they go and the farms are following. In the pioneer days the hickory hams were prepared for the table; the last loving touch was given to the jelly and the marmalade that it might grace and flavor a Sunday dinner when the folks were all at home. The feather beds mounted step-ladder high so that the children might find none better in any hotel in the city. Everything lured to the home and conspired to keep one there. The four fireplaces in the old log house did not so much add to the market price as to the comfort of the folks. From 1800 to 1860 the pioneers built up a

great home civilization. The cities were mean and dirty in comparison. From 1860 to the present the emphasis has gone to the city until it bids fair to rob the country of every attractive feature.

Another striking contrast between that society and ours of today is in its organization. The individual was emphasized then, the community now. If there was superiority in the house or farm it was due to the man or woman or both who owned it. The pioneer aristocrat could say of everything about him, "these are mine," and of most of them, "I made them." Beginning with the State government he could say of every institution with which he came in contact, "this is part of my handiwork. There is no office here but what I can fill." Coming down to his farm, he made practically all the furniture from the fence rails to the sideboard. Except for a little iron on his plow and wagon, and the wheels of his wagon and carriage he was the sole author of his line of farming implements. He, at his home, might sit down to a sumptuous feast with the preacher, the judge and the colonel all present and listen to their words of praise and their eloquent deeds of praise, conscious that every article on the table from the mutton roast to the jelly cake came from the farm which he owned and operated. As a result of this a strong individualism prevailed. Each farm was an economic unit, all but independent. There was great satisfaction to the farmer in this condition and a satisfied, prosperous farming class is a fair basis for a good society.

Not being organized on a money-making basis our pioneer society gave much more opportunity for leisurely reflection than we have at present. These were the days when the neighbors, in Platonic style, gathered at the country store and discussed all possible questions. There was time for checkers and horse shoes, for hard cider and long green.

There was predestination and original sin to be discussed, as well as the signs for a cold or open winter. There was the latest cure for rheumatism, the latest concoction of bitters struggling for recognition in good society.

These same folks who stood speechless in the presence of the grandeur of nature planted their cucumbers when the sign was in the arm so they would grow long; planted their

potatoes in the dark of the moon so they would not all grow to tops; knew that if the new moon lay on its back the month would be dry; carried buckeyes in their pockets to keep off rheumatism; carried the left front foot of a rabbit killed in a graveyard in the dark of the moon for good luck; butchered their hogs in the dark of the moon lest when the pork was fried it all go to grease; believed that if a child were born when the sign was in the stomach he would be hearty; if the sign was in the head he would be wise; if it clung to a pencil when first presented to it it was destined to a noble professional career. All nature was full of personal significance, full of signs and potents to their superstitious minds. But this characteristic must not be passed over too lightly. Many of these signs and sayings were based on long and careful observations. Their weather prognostications took the place of the present weather bureau reports and at least were quite as accurate. Most of the prudential sayings which Franklin printed in his almanac and which have since passed for proverbs were the folk lore of the thrifty German peasants, the Pennsylvania Dutch. A large majority of their small superstitions had kernels of wisdom concealed in the cores. There were special days for special deeds, many of them determined by the phases of the moon or the zodiacal sign.

The whole pioneer atmosphere was charged with a mysterious element somewhat akin to religion and somewhat akin to superstition. They were not a scientific people. Their civilization was built on experience, carefully treasured up and most curiously translated. There were no sufficient means for determining the facts and their so-called reasoning without the facts led to no valid conclusions.

In central Indiana there located a physician, a graduate of Yale, energetic and skillful. He kept two fine, fleet, black horses. His skill so far surpassed that of the neighboring herb doctors that it became mysterious. Members of the family almost held their breath as the silent mysterious physician entered the house, ungloved his hand, passed it over the hot face of the patient, felt the pulse, issued out the tiniest bit of magical powder and was gone. Some saw him sweep by in the moonlight without sound or motion, others heard the click of his horse's hoofs but saw nothing as he passed by in

the night on the wings of the storm, riding his black charger, always going as if pursued. He was a wizard. There was no doubt.

From a personal standpoint their philosophy was broadly humanitarian. Individuals might differ in endowments or wealth, but each bore the impress of the Deity and thus was entitled to respect. This conception had far-reaching consequences. It made slavery impossible, prevented any deep class distinctions, made public schools possible, and laid a broad foundation for Jacksonian Democracy. In social life it made the difference between Emerson and Lincoln, between the man who fastens his eye on a distant goal and crushes on through the wreck and ruin of hopes and lives to its consummation, and the man who shapes his life to afford the greatest pleasure to himself and neighbors without much regard to the fulfillment of his own self-appointed destiny.

Politically, their philosophy was most curious and their conduct contradictory. Long and bitter experience had made them distrustful of government either in the church or the state. Unlike the Puritans and Cavaliers and all other civilized peoples of their time, they conceded no divinity to laws or courts. If the law measured up to their sense of justice they enforced it, if the court meted out substantial justice they obeyed it. If the law was otherwise it remained a dead letter, if the court failed they called in Judge Lynch and the halter strap. Not swift to transcend the law, but certain if the provocation continued. In contradiction, they gave their full strength to America in the Revolution, not so much because they loved America as that they hated England. They fought the military part of the war of 1812 largely in gratification of their enmity toward England and the Indians, and finally they saved the United States in the Civil War not because they hated the South, but because they loved the Union. A strange and happy transformation in the attitude toward the government has come about since our folks engaged in the Whiskey Rebellion, wrote the Kentucky Resolutions, intrigued with Spain and encouraged Burr. Each recognized within himself great political capacity, such that he would willingly undertake to hold any office he could get, from postmaster to congressman. This confidence was inspired by the fact that

he and his neighbors had organized the government both state and local. All the institutions around him were his own handiwork, the product of his mind and hand. He wanted all the education he could get for himself and children, but he paid his taxes grudgingly.

Economically he liked to picture himself self-sufficient and wholly independent. His ideal was a farm which furnished him all the necessities of life. He opposed the state or United States bank because the bank was too powerful. He could not meet it on the level. He preferred a canal to a railroad because on the canal he could launch his own boat and come and go independently of any other power. On a railroad he would have to accommodate his needs to another man's pleasure. He was in his glory floating down the Mississippi with a flatboat load of produce, dickering with the plantation owners on the coast. Even thus abroad he maintained the natural simplicity of his life, not avaricious, not a close bargainer but reveling in his freedom to buy or sell as he pleased. He made a spectacle as he ambled along the levee or in the fashionable streets of New Orleans or even Cincinnati, with his pants legs hooked over the inside ear of his boots. He was such a robust animal himself he couldn't help but pity the whole world except his own neighbors in Indiana.

Such in brief was the old society in Indiana. It demanded of its political and clerical servants obedience and we might profit by the same practice. It developed a capable, all-round, independent citizenship with some good qualities and some bad. It developed a type of rural home life which it made attractive. Finally, it laid a heavy emphasis on individual worth and integrity, an emphasis we seem to need at present.